

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0311

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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1. SUMMARY: THE FIFTH SINO-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON MAINLAND CHINA PROVIDED THE GROC WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE US CHINA SCHOLARS, MANY OF WHOM HAD NOT RECENTLY VISITED THE ROC, TO THE IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS ON TAIWAN AND TO AIR ITS VIEW THAT US NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE PRC WAS NEITHER DESIRABLE NOR NECESSARY. AT THE SAME TIME THE CONFERENCE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A PRODUCTIVE, AND AT TIMES STIMULATING, EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AMONG US AND ROC SCHOLARS. A PAPER BY THOMAS ROBINSON IN WHICH HE APPEARED TO ADVOCATE ADOPTION BY THE US OF THE JAPANESE FORMULA FOR POST-NORMALIZATION US/ROC RELATIONS SPARKED THE MOST DEBATE DURING THE CONFERENCE AND WAS STRONGLY ATTACKED BY MANY OTHER US PARTICIPANTS. RAY CLINE'S CALL FOR THE ADOPTION OF A GERMAN MODEL IN PURSUING NORMALIZATION RECEIVED THE BIGGEST HEADLINES LOCALLY AND APPEARED TO MEET WITH A MEASURE OF APPROVAL, AT LEAST AMONG SOME MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FIFTH SINO-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON MAINLAND CHINA, HELD IN TAIPEI JUNE 8-13, WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 40 AMERICAN

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SCHOLARS AND MORE THAN 50 ROC PARTICIPANTS. JUDGING FROM

COMMENTS MADE BY THOSE INVOLVED, BOTH THE GROC AND THE PARTICIPANTS WERE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN UNUSUALLY SUCCESSFUL.

3. THE CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN A SCHOLARY ATMOSPHERE AND THE PHYSICAL FACILITIES OF THE CONFERENCE HALL WERE OF A MUCH HIGHER QUALITY THAN THOSE OF PAST CONFERENCES HELD HERE. WHILE OCCASIONAL PROBLEMS AROSE (ESPECIALLY REGARDING SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION), ALL AGREED THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN ADMINISTERED SMOOTHLY.

4. UNDER THE ABLE GUIDANCE OF INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IIR) DIRECTOR TSAI WEI-PING AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR WEI YUNG, THE CONFERENCE ATTRACTED (INTENTIONALLY) A FAIRLY BROAD RANGE OF US CHINA SCHOLARS, INCLUDING SOME WHO WERE NOT ENTIRELY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE GROC. THERE WAS ONLY ONE MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT IN ATTENDANCE -- THE ABSENCE OF A. DOAK BARNETT (WHOSE WIFE WAS HOSPITALIZED AT THE TIME.)

5. THE QUESTION OF US PARTICIPANTS AND THE SCOPE OF THE CONFERENCE WAS, ACCORDING TO BOTH TSAI AND WEI, A SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE KMT AND THE GROC. SOME "HARDLINERS" WERE REPORTEDLY ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO INVITING THOSE VIEWED AS UNSYMPATHETIC TOWARD THE GROC AND URGED THAT DISCUSSIONS BE LIMITED IN SUCH A WAY THAT ONLY VIEWPOINTS NOT IN OPPOSITION TO THE GROC'S POLITICAL STANCE WOULD BE AIRED. HOWEVER, THE VIEWS OF OTHERS IN THE IIR AND ELSEWHERE IN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT WHO SAW ADVANTAGE IN EXPOSING POTENTIALLY INFLUENTIAL US SCHOLARS, WHATEVER THEIR POLITICAL POSITION, TO MODERN-DAY TAIWAN PREVAILED: AND BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE, THEIR GAMBLE PAID OFF.

6. NEARLY ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS WITH WHOM THE EMBASSY SPOKE WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THE REMARKABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS VISIBLE ON THE ISLAND. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH THE GROC AVOIDED ITS NORMAL, RATHER HEAVY-HANDED PROPAGANDA APPROACH WITH CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS, THERE WAS AMPLE OCCASION -- BOTH IN FORMAL SESSIONS AND IN INFORMAL ENCOUNTERS -- FOR THE GROC TO PRESENT ITS VIEW THAT US LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DERECOGNITION OF THE ROC WAS BOTH UNNECESSARY AND UNDESIRABLE. AS A RESULT, IT APPEARS THAT US PARTICIPANTS (ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAD NOT RECENTLY VISITED TAIWAN) DEPARTED WITH A MORE SYMPATHETIC VIEW TOWARD THE ISLAND AND THE GROC'S POSITION THAN THAT WITH WHICH THEY HAD ARRIVED.

7. AT THE REQUEST OF ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS (ROBERT SCALAPINO), WHO SAID HE WAS MAKING HIS REQUEST ON BEHALF

OF A LARGE NUMBER OF THE US-CITIZEN PARTICIPANTS, AMBASSADOR UNGER HOSTED A BOX LUNCH BRIEFING WITH AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS ON JUNE 10 DURING THE GROUP'S NOON BREAK, WHICH PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO SHARE VIEWS AND RAISE QUESTIONS CONCERNING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS ON TAIWAN AND THE MORE GENERAL QUESTION OF US CHINA POLICY. WHILE THE PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE AMBASSADOR, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WERE THOSE IN THE GROG (WHO HAD ARGUED UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR TAKING THE OCCASION OF THE CONFERENCE TO SUBJECT US PARTICIPANTS TO THE USUAL GROG PROPAGANDA PITCH) WHO WERE DISPLEASED THAT THE US EMBASSY HAD BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN THE OFFICIAL USG POSITION ON CHINA POLICY.

8. WITH REGARD TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONFERENCE, MOST OF THE US-CITIZEN PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN WORTHWHILE. HOWEVER, A SIZEABLE MINORITY OF GENERALLY YOUNGER PROFESSORS THOUGHT THAT THE HAND OF THE GROG WAS TILL A BIT HEAVY AND THAT SOME OF ITS IDEOLOGICAL VIEWS HAD LIMITED ROC PARTICIPANTS' ABILITY TO ASSESS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON THE MAINLAND OBJECTIVELY. (IN PARTICULAR, THEY QUESTIONED THE CONCLUSION BY MOST ROC PARTICIPANTS THAT DESTABILIZATION ON THE MAINLAND HAD REACHED THE POINT WHERE THE COLLAPSE OF THE PRC GOVERNMENT MIGHT OCCUR). NONETHELESS, THE AMERICAN SCHOLARS WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THE WEALTH OF FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE DISPLAYED BY THE ROC PARTICIPANTS.

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9. ALTHOUGH MANY OF THE DISCUSSIONS WERE INTERESTING, THERE WERE ONLY TWO THAT WERE OF A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE NATURE: JERRY COHEN'S DISCUSSION OF RESPECT FOR LAW IN CHINESE CULTURE AND THOMAS ROBINSON'S PRESENTATION ON US/CHINA POLICY. COHEN, IN THE FIRST DAY'S AFTERNOON SESSION, DISCUSSED THE CHINESE APPROACH TO LAW, FIRST USING SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG AS EXAMPLES, THEN EXPANDING HIS DISCUSSION TO CHINESE SOCIETY IN GENERAL. HE CONCLUDED THAT IN CHINESE CULTURE RESPECT FOR LAW EXISTED IN THEORY ONLY RATHER THAN IN FACT AND THAT THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IN APPROACH TO LAW IN THE PRC AND TAIWAN WAS A MATTER OF DEGREE. HE ALSO STRESSED THAT THE US PUBLIC WAS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO US FOREIGN POLICY AND GAVE A VEILED WARNING TO THE GROC CONCERNING ITS ATTITUDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS. COHEN'S COMMENTS APPARENTLY CAUGHT HIS HOSTS OFF-GUARD, BUT THE TRANSLATOR ROSE TO THE OCCASION AND OMITTED MANY REFERENCES UNFAVORABLE TO THE GROC IN HIS TRANSLATION.

10. THE MOST LIVELY DISCUSSION OCCURRED ON THE LAST DAY,
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WHEN THOMAS ROBINSON PRESENTED A PAPER ENTITLED "PEKING-WASHINGTON RELATIONS: ANALYSIS AND PROJECTIONS". IN HIS PAPER, WHICH HE CLAIMED WAS AN ANALYSIS RATHER THAN A PAPER OF ADVOCACY, ROBINSON APPEARED TO CALL FOR EARLY RECOGNITION OF PEKING (I.E., BEFORE MAO DIES) AND ADOPTION OF THE JAPANESE FORMULA FOR FUTURE US/ROC RELATIONS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ROBINSON'S PAPER, EXTREMELY SENSITIVE FROM THE GROC'S VIEWPOINT, WAS ONE OF THE FEW WHICH THE GROC ASKED THE AUTHOR TO MODIFY BEFORE PUBLISHING; AND A COMPROMISE WAS REACHED.

11. DURING THE DISCUSSION PERIOD ROBINSON WAS HEAVILY ATTACKED BY RAY CLINE, DIXIE WALKER, RICHARD THORNTON, GASTON SIGUR, AND JURGEN DOMES, WITH THE ROC PARTICIPANTS PLAYING A RELATIVELY PASSIVE ROLE. ROBINSON CLAIMED THAT THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE HAS AN ANTI-SOVIET PURPOSE, THAT AN ANTI-SOVIET COALITION BETWEEN THE US AND THE PRC MUST BE CONCLUDED BEFORE MAO DIES, THAT WASHINGTON NEEDS THIS MORE THAN PEKING, AND THAT A POST-MAO SETTLEMENT OF THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE COULD HALT IMPROVEMENT OF SINO-US RELATIONS.

12. IN RESPONSE WALKER SCOFFED THAT MANY EMBASSIES IN PEKING WISH THEY TOO HAD "NORMALIZATION". THORNTON SAID THE US SHOULD NOT RECOGNIZE PEKING AS AN ACT OF STATESMANSHIP BUT BECAUSE WE WANT TO KEEP THE PRC AND THE USSR IN A STATE OF TENSION. CLINE ACCUSED ROBINSON OF PROPOUNDING WHAT HE CALLED THE "GRAND DESIGN OF HENRY KISSINGER", WHICH, HE SAID, "IS AS DEAD AS YESTERDAY'S NEWSPAPER". THE PRC IS THE SUPPLIANT, HE ADDED, AND WE SHOULD NOT UNDERTAKE THE UNDIGNIFIED ACT OF BUYING A RELATIONSHIP FROM PEKING.

13. HARRY HARDING, THE LONE VOICE DEFENDING ROBINSON, CALLED ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR MORE FACTS, DECRYING THOSE WHO REFERRED TO THE "JETTISONING OF TAIWAN" WHEN THE POINT AT ISSUE AS ACTUALLY NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH PEKING. AMONG THOSE FACTS WHICH HARDING SAID THEY NEEDED TO KNOW WERE: 1) WHAT IS THE SINO-SOVIET MILITARY BALANCE; 2) HOW DEPENDENT IS PEKING ON OUTSIDE FORCES; AND 3) HOW IMPORTANT TO PEKING IS THE WITHDRAWAL OF US DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS FROM TAIPEI. ONCE WE HAVE ANSWERS FOR THESE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUESTIONS, HE SAID, WE WOULD HAVE LESS ADVOCACY AND MORE ANALYSIS.

14. ROBINSON CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT CLINE AND OTHERS HAD MISSED THE REAL POINT OF HIS PAPER, NAMELY, THAT THE BASIC QUESTION IS HOW TO GUARANTEE STABILITY AND THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE ROC IN THE PERIOD WHEN (NOT IF) THE US BEGINS TO NEGOTIATE WITH PEKING.

15. THE CONFERENCE WAS GIVEN WIDE PUBLICITY BY THE LOCAL PRESS (AND PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME PICKED UP ATTENTION IN THE US AND FOREIGN PRESS) AND US PARTICIPANTS WERE POPULAR TARGETS FOR PRESS INTERVIEWS. BIGGEST HEADLINES WENT TO RAY CLINE, WHO REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED THAT WASHINGTON ADOPT A "GERMAN MODEL" IN SEEKING TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH PEKING, RESULTING IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE ROC AND THE PRC. CLINE'S SUGGESTION HAS BEEN WARMLY ALTHOUGH CAUTIOUSLY ACCEPTED HERE BY AT LEAST SOME MIDDLE-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AS WELL AS OTHERS, DESPITE ITS TWO-CHINA CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

16 LISTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND COPIES OF ALL PAPERS PUBLISHED WILL BE POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT AND HONG KONG ONLY.
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